

12.725 BLOOD DRYING ROOMS: PROCESSING OF EVIDENCE EXPOSED TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Reference:

Procedure 12.310 - Waste and Medical Debris Used at Crime Scenes and Traffic Accidents

Procedure 12.715 - Property and Evidence: Confiscation, Accountability, Processing, Storage, and Release

Procedure 12.720 - Evidence: Submitting for Physical Analysis

Cincinnati Police Department Training Bulletin #142: Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan

Investigations Manual

Definition:

Evidence: Items collected and submitted to a court of law as proof to ascertain the truth regarding an offense that occurred. It must be legally obtained to be admissible in court.

Information:

The Police Department's blood drying rooms are located at District Four. There are three drying rooms lettered I, J, and K and a processing room lettered L. Room L contains all necessary paperwork and personal protection equipment.

As there are only three blood drying rooms, careful thought must be given when deciding if items are of evidentiary value. Only evidence which must be analyzed by the Hamilton County Coroner's Office or submitted as evidence in a court of law should be considered for processing. Items which do not have evidentiary value should be photographed, placed in a biohazard bag, and transported to a fire station or hospital for disposal.

Refer to Procedure 12.310, Waste and Medical Debris Used at Crime Scenes and Traffic Accidents, for questions concerning medical debris, blood, and body fluids from a crime scene, traffic accident, or in public places such as sidewalks and streets.

Purpose:

Provide a safe working environment for employees who deal with the processing and drying of contaminated items that have EVIDENTIARY value.

Provide maximum protection for those employees and citizens who work or conduct business in the facility where the evidence is processed.

Policy:

Do not use the blood drying rooms merely for the purpose of drying items coming into police custody. The on-scene supervisor of an incident must determine if contaminated items are EVIDENTIARY in nature and whether they will be needed as evidence in a court proceeding. If the on-scene supervisor is uncertain whether the contaminated items are of evidentiary value, the supervisor should contact a Homicide Unit supervisor for guidance and assistance.

Do not accept any contaminated evidence, i.e., blood soaked clothing, from a hospital without contacting a District Four supervisor to ensure there is sufficient room in the blood drying rooms to house the evidence.

Procedure:

A. Notifications:

1. Personnel intending to use the blood drying rooms must contact a District Four supervisor to obtain access.
 - a. Keys to the blood drying rooms are kept in a secure location accessible only to District Four supervisors.

B. Packaging of Evidence for Transport to Blood Drying Rooms:

1. Place all contaminated evidence in an evidence bag or leak proof container.
 - a. Process each item separately to avoid cross contamination.
 - b. Avoid using plastic for transporting evidence. If evidence is received from a hospital or other source enclosed in plastic, it should be transported to the blood drying facility and removed from the plastic within two hours.
 - c. Leak proof containers are available from Supply Unit.
2. Use a sufficient amount of packaging material to prevent any leakage during transporting.
3. Contaminated evidence will not be permitted inside District Four if it is not properly packaged.

C. District Four Processing:

1. Respond to the interior of the District Four garage.
2. Request District Four desk personnel open the access door.
 - a. Absolutely no contaminated evidence will be brought into District Four by any other means.
3. Respond immediately to the blood drying rooms located near the front desk in the south end of District Four. Wait for the arrival of a District Four supervisor to provide access to the blood drying rooms.
4. All personnel entering the blood drying rooms must wear rubber gloves, shoe coverings, a mask, and eye protection when handling contaminated items. The listed personal protective equipment is stored in the cabinet in Room L.
 - a. Officers transporting the contaminated items are responsible for processing the evidence.
 - b. Place contaminated rubber gloves, shoe coverings, and masks in biohazard bags located in the drying room. Decontaminate protective eyewear.
 - c. Notify a Homicide Unit supervisor when supplies need to be replenished.
 - d. A Homicide Unit supervisor will respond to the drying rooms once a week to inspect the rooms, review the log book, and restock the supply room.

D. Blood Drying Rooms I, J, and K and Processing Room L:

1. Blood drying rooms will be used by only one investigator at a time. Place suspect's and victim's clothing in separate rooms to avoid cross contamination.
2. Each room is equipped with a stainless steel, horizontally mounted bar.
 - a. Drape evidence over the bar for drying.
 - b. Place white butcher block paper on the floor if unable to use the drying bar.

3. After putting the evidence in one of the rooms, tape a copy of the completed Form 330, Property Receipt, to the glass of the drying room door.
 4. Place a plastic zip-tie on the outside hasp of the door to ensure continuity of evidence. Do not use evidence tape to secure the door. The drying room door must remain locked at all times.
 5. Enter all information in the log book kept in Room L. Also make a blotter entry at District Four and the unit of assignment of the processing officer.
 6. Evidence must remain in the blood drying rooms for a minimum of 24 hours. Evidence must be removed within 72 hours. The processing officer must coordinate with a District Four supervisor when removing items from the blood drying rooms. It is the responsibility of the officer placing the items in the blood drying room to remove them on time.
 - a. Any time extensions must be approved by a Homicide Unit supervisor.
 - b. Make a blotter entry when you remove evidence from a room so the room can be disinfected by District Four cleaning personnel. It is imperative to note the room used in each blotter entry.
 7. Use Room L to do paperwork only. Do not bring contaminated materials into Room L.
- E. Transporting Evidence from District Four to the Court Property Unit:
1. Place dried contaminated evidence in an evidence bag or leak proof container.
 - a. Place a Form 330 and biohazard label on the outside of the evidence bag or container.